

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Daniel 2:1-13 | Session 4 | B.C. 603

DANIEL'S DETERMINATION

Chapter one was an overview of Daniel's life, approximately 65 years, from his deportation from Judah to Babylon (at the age of 15), his first three years in the Chaldean education system and the royal court of Nebuchadnezzar, to a brief conclusion (while in his 80's) **unto the first year of Cyrus**, King of Persia (Daniel 1:21) who overthrew Babylon around B.C. 537 (Daniel 10:1).

Nebuchadnezzar himself would make three sieges on Judah, the first wave in B.C. 607 was to capture the young, bright people. Daniel and his three friends were among the best and the brightest in Jerusalem and Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar's goal was a three-year brainwashing and indoctrination for these boys into Babylonian culture and thinking. After which they would enter into the king's service. Their bodies were changed; they were castrated (made eunuchs), their diets were changed, and Nebuchadnezzar changed their Godly Hebrew names, which reflected God's character, into names which were antithetical; names of pagan deities. Brainwashing these boys to become upstanding Babylonians would make Nebuchadnezzar's job of destroying all of Judah and taking all the people captive much easier.

Daniel must have had good parents who brought him up in the way of the Lord, for once in Babylon he **purposed in his heart** (literally, his mind) **that he would not defile himself** (1:8). Proverbs 1:6 says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it."* The 19th century preacher, Charles Spurgeon applied this verse to, *Train up a child in the way you wish you had gone yourself!* Every child once grown must make their own choices, but parents are the catalyst for launching them in the right (or wrong) direction.

No matter what the culture, Daniel would continue to obey the law of Moses as he had been instructed as a child. He did not eat the king's food which would have violated Jewish law, and God blessed him with the ability to understand and interpret visions and dreams (Daniel 1:17), which would very soon save his life and the life of his friends.

Daniel was a Jew, and as such was one of God's People; set apart from the Gentile nations. From his immersion into Judaism from birth, Daniel knew God's purpose and plan for his nation of Israel.

Israel was set apart by God to be a kingdom of priests¹ (Exodus 19:6), and they were to be God's light to the whole world (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). Israel's intended role was to receive God's revelation and communicate it to the nations who were ignorant of God. They failed at this over the centuries, but the

¹ The Church (or Body of Christ: (Romans 7:4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 12:27; Ephesians 4:12) is not the Kingdom of Priests as is so often misapplied in 1 Peter 2:9.

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Jews will ultimately be recognized, in the millennial Kingdom of God, as God's people (Zechariah 8:21-23). Until then Israel is oppressed and trampled down in what Jesus called, the *Times of the Gentiles* (See note in box below).

Through disobedience to God's commandments, they relinquished their nation to the Gentiles (continuing even today). God, however would raise up spokesmen and prophets who would foretell of a day when Israel would be restored through their Messiah, Redeemer. In that day the nations will come to *worship the King* along with the Jews (Zechariah 14:16).

Being forced to live outside of his nation, Daniel was determined to act according to the Laws put down by God.

Although we do not follow Law today, we can be like Daniel by guarding ourselves against being conformed to our day in which we live (Romans 12:2). We can model our lives after Daniel in that we can live a Godly Christian life; even in our pagan godless culture. We can speak as the Lord's ambassadors to those in our own sphere of influence, just as Daniel was God's spokesman to the Gentiles; kings and wise men.

THE KING'S FORGOTTEN DREAM

Chapter 2:1—

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel recalls (i.e., looks back on) what occurred soon after his captivity and Nebuchadnezzar's accession to the throne (which happened nearly simultaneously). **Nebuchadnezzar dreamed** (singular) **dreams** (plural). We will see later that he had the same dream (singular) over and over (plural). Whatever this dream was it **troubled** him and caused him to lose **sleep**. The dream was God's revelation, to get Nebuchadnezzar's attention.

Keep in mind as we study this passage that the interpretation or even the significance of dreams is unnecessary in our *dispensation of grace*. We have the perfect Word of God, and nothing else is needed for us to know God and His will. Dreams today are a product of our mind's imagination, or indigestion from a piece of bad fish the evening before!

In addition, this account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is historical. There is a primary rule of interpreting Scripture: Never make a doctrine from an historical account. That means, the dreams you and I have are of no significance in our dispensation. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "*Prophecies (this would include dreams) shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away...But when the perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*" The **perfect** is the Word of God. There is nothing more we need. People are always seeking signs and visions to bring meaning to their lives, but the value in living is as simple as what they hold in their hands in the pages of God's holy Word. Yet many fail to search there! We have the completed Word of God which is why it is so important to *Study to show ourselves approved unto God* (2 Timothy 2:15).

So they came and stood before the king. Likely the pronoun *they* refer to all of the men who were practiced in the art of the occult. Combined, the men were called the *wise men*. But just as it was in Daniel's day the same holds true for today: *Wise men* without a Biblical worldview are foolish.

You have probably heard of Elon Musk, the richest man in the world. He is a great inventor of some pretty awesome things; Tesla electric cars, SpaceX rockets, PayPal e-payments, and so many other things you are probably use or are familiar with. He is a smart man, but in other ways, Elon Musk is dangerous, perhaps even foolish some would say. In 2020 it was announced of Elon Musk that:

Within five years, we will no longer need clumsy human language which he says is a source of eternal misunderstandings, because he will provide a microchip that can be built into the brain and that will allow humans to communicate via flawless digital signals.²

Imagine a baby being born and never hearing his mother's voice? Or, never ourselves hearing the soothing or comforting voice of a friend in a time of despair. A digital signal cannot take the place of a human touch, or human voice. Does Musk have a Biblical worldview? Doubtful. Perhaps more of a globalist or even a universalist worldview might be a closer call.

The apostle Paul wrote, *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools..."* (Romans 1:21,22).

Later, in Daniel 2:48, Daniel will be promoted as *chief of governors over all the wise men of Babylon*. He would turn the tables on king's attempt to brainwash him and his friends (1:4), and instead he will teach Biblical worldview truth to these pagan *tools/fools* of the Devil. God would use the teaching of Daniel five hundred years later, when *wise men from the east* would come to Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, searching for the Messiah, the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1). Through God's providential hand, Daniel had great influence on world events hundreds of years later, heralding the coming Savior.

Verses 3—

I have dreamed a dream. The **Chaldeans** (Were they perhaps the wisest or the wise?) appear to be the spokesmen and they **spake...to the king in Syriack** (that is, *Aramaic*. The Book of Daniel is written in two languages: Chapters 1:1-2:4a, and chapters 8-12 are written in Hebrew. Chapters 2:4b-7:28 are written in Aramaic beginning with **O king** (the word *Syriack*, translates as "Syrian language").

What concerns the Jews is written in Hebrew, what concerns the Gentiles is written in Aramaic.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

² Cited in *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, page 45. Mattia Desmet, 2022. P

The Times of the Gentiles—

This expression is not found in the Old Testament, but is a New Testament phrase only used once by the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 21:24). It refers to the time period when Jerusalem will be controlled (Literally, trodden down; trample or crush with feet). The Times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian Captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and when the “glory of the Lord” departed from Jerusalem. The prophet Ezekiel describes the Lord’s departure from the city in B.C. 594 (Ezekiel 11:22,23). The dominion that once as Israel’s because the throne of God was in their midst has been taken away and transferred to the Gentiles; even to this day. God has given over His glory to the glory of man (Jeremiah 27:5-9). God’s glory will not be seen again until the Lord Jesus Christ returns in the *glory of his power* (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 15:8).

THE DECREE TO SLAY THE WISE MEN

Verses 4-13—

O king (the first Aramaic word), **live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.** This is a reasonable request. Most likely these wise men have interpreted dreams before. But in this case, it was different.

The king...said...the thing is gone from me. The king knew he had a troublesome dream, but could not remember what the **thing** (apparently the **thing** was the dream). His demand was for all the wise men to tell him the dream and then interpret it. This seems impossible. The wise men try to *buy some time*, and the king understands their stall tactic; **that ye would gain time....**

The wise men plead with the king that **there is not a man upon the earth that can** tell the king what his dream was, no one. Why not? Because this was a God induced dream; it was spiritually discerned. The things that come from God, the Spirit of God, are understood only through spiritual means. The apostle Paul wrote,

“But the natural man³ receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

It is interesting these Babylonians believed in a higher power since they said only **the gods, whose dwelling is not with** flesh could tell him the dream. The problem was, these wise men worshipped the wrong god. What was needed was someone who had the Spirit of God within him, then the God

³ The natural man is an unbeliever, but he can also be a believer who is conformed to this world and not transformed by the renewing of his mind (Romans 12:2).

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induced dream could be revealed. For the wise men, admitting to the King that no one was capable of doing what he wanted, it was a sentence of death.

The decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; We find out in verse 13 that **Daniel and his fellows** were included in the company of the wise men and they too were to **be slain**. But remember chapter 1:8, **God gave them** (Daniel and his three friends) **knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams**. It is only Daniel (along with his friends) who can tell the king what he wants to hear, but they have all just been sentenced to death.